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REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-11, 13-19, and 21-25 are amended herein, and new claims 26-35 are added. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

The Office has rejected claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,999,932 to Paul (Paul) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,544,360 to Lewak et al. (Lewak). In particular, the Office asserts that Paul teaches a method for displaying an e-mail collection comprising receiving a sequence of e-mail messages (col. 3, lines 60-65) and categorizing each of the e-mail messages into at least one of a plurality of categories (col. 3, lines 60-65, and col. 4, lines 2-40). The Office correctly states that Paul does not explicitly teach displaying each of the categorized messages in accordance with a display specification, wherein the display specification specifies one of a plurality of levels of the granularity for how the categorized messages in each of the plurality of categories are displayed.

However, the Office asserts that Lewak discloses displaying each of the categorized messages with specification that specifies one of plurality of levels of the granularity for how the categorized messages in each of plurality of categories are displayed (Hierarchy in Fig. 1 and categorize window 50 of Fig. 5 displayed) (files stored in a hierarchical, and displaying, selecting categorized files) (see col. 6, lines 33-57, and col. 16, lines 27-53), and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to implement the teachings of Lewak into the computer system of Paul.

However, neither Paul nor Lewak, alone or in combination, teach a method, computer controlled display system, or an information storage media wherein categorized messages are displayed "in accordance with a user-defined display specification, wherein the display specification specifies, for each category and subcategory, the manner in which the messages categorized within that particular category or subcategory are to be displayed in a top-level representation of the entire e-mail collection, and wherein at least one category or subcategory is displayed in a different manner than at least one other category or subcategory" as is recited in independent claims 1, 8, and 16.

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Instead, Paul discloses a system and method for filtering and sorting incoming e-mail messages into categories based on the content in various fields of data in the incoming messages, including the "FROM" field, the "TO" field, and the "SUBJECT" field. According to Paul, if the data in any of the fields of the incoming messages matches data in corresponding data categories stored in an inclusion list manager, the e-mail is marked with a display code indicating "OK" status of the message. The incoming message is then displayed in the user's inbox in accordance with the display code. If the data does not match the data in the inclusion list or other criteria, the incoming message is marked with an alternative display code. Each e-mail message is displayed to the user in accordance with its respective display code, thereby indicating status of the message to the user. (Col. 4, lines 1-40). Thus, Paul essentially discloses to filter incoming messages based on the content of the messages and categorizing the messages accordingly, which is well-known in the art.

Lewak discloses a filing system for accessing files and data according to user-designated criteria. In particular, Lewak merely discloses a searchable computer filing system wherein files are placed into one or more descriptive categories. (Col. 8, lines 61-65). A search may then be conducted of the filing system to find files by defining a search filter based on the categories in which the files are categorized. (Col. 10, lines 20-37). The result of the search process is then displayed as a set of standard file identifiers, that is file name, volume reference, and directory identification. (Col. 12, lines 17-20). In other words, Lewak discloses a method for associating files with one or more keywords and for dynamically creating directories of associated files based on keyword queries.

To the contrary, the claimed invention relates to methods, computer controlled display systems, and information storage media wherein previously categorized messages are displayed in accordance with a user-defined display specification. The display specification specifies, for each category and subcategory, the manner in which the messages categorized within that particular category or subcategory are to be displayed in a top-level representation of the entire e-mail collection. The top-level e-mail collection display includes a display of the entire content of the e-mail collection. Within that top-level display, a user is enabled to specify the level of detail at which the content of each category or subcategory is displayed. Thus, the claimed invention provides a convenient system and method for obtaining useful top-level views of the entire content of an email folder, such as an inbox, in which some categories may be expanded to differing degree of detail, for example, to the thread or

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message level, and some not, depending on the applicable task. For example, if the user desires to see only the most important messages, then categories containing those messages can be shown expanded, and other categories may be collapsed into summary items (indicating e.g., the number of messages in the category). If, on the other hand, the task is to examine and deal with some less important messages, then all categories can be shown collapsed, so that the user can easily select which category to review without inordinate scrolling. The display specification as recited in the claims is specified by the user, lists all the categories that might be encountered in the folder, and specifies how each such category is to be treated in the display. Examples of types of display include (a) to not represent the category in the view at all, (b) to represent the entire collection of messages within the category by a single summary item, (c) to represent the category by one summary item for each discussion thread in the category, (d) to fully expand the category, providing a separate item for each message, etc.

Based on the amendments and remarks above, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Paul nor Lewak, alone or in combination, teach or render obvious the novel features recited in independent claims 1, 8, and 16. Claims 2-7, 9-15, and 17-35 are allowable on their own merits, in addition to their allowability by virtue of their dependencies on claims 1, 8, and 16. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of all of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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